in Iraq in civilian and non-combatant jobs, such as helps in kitchen, dining facilities, laundry, transport, maintenance etc

Indians working in Iraq

†1695. SHRI RAJ MOHINDER SINGH: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that over 7,000 of Indians are earning their livelihood by means of various kinds of work in Iraq;

(b) if not, the exact number thereof and the kind of work they are engaged in;

(c) whether it is also a fact that most of them are interested in returning to India; and

(d) if so, the estimated number thereof and arrangements Government have made to bring them back?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI E AHAMMED): (a) and (b) It is estimated that about 5000 Indians are presently working in Iraq in civilian and non-combatant jobs such as helps in kitchen, dining facilities, laundry, transport and maintenance etc

(c) and (d) A small number of Indians in Iraq who approached the Indian Mission in Baghdad expressing their desire to return to India were extended all possible assistance.

To assist Indians in Iraq who want to return to India, the Government has taken the following steps:

(1) Government has instructed the Indian Missions in Iraq and its neighbouring countries to extend all possible assistance to the Indian nationals in Iraq who want to return to India.

(2) Government has taken up with the Governments of Jordan and Kuwait for transit visas for Indians returning to India from Iraq.

(3) Indian Mission in Baghdad has contracted the employers of Indians who wish to return to India to facilitate their travel out

† Original notice of the question was received in Hindi

of Iraq and for expeditious settlement of their dues by their employers.

(4) The Indian Embassy in Baghdad has sent its officials to some of the places in Iraq where the Indians are located to enquire after their well-being and safety and to provide them assistance and guidance in case they wish to leave Iraq

Facilities for Confidence-Building Measures

1696. SHRI GIREESH KUMAR SANGHI: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether any efforts have been made or pressure put to persuade India by the US to resume talks at any point of time in the last six months,

(b) the efforts made by India on its own to build Confidence-Building Measures with Pakistan during the above mentioned period, and

(c) whether the same has borne fruit in the recent past?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI E AHAMMED) (a) No, Sir However, the international community, including the United States, have conveyed their support for an end to cross border terrorism and a bilateral dialogue process between India and Pakistan

(b) and (c) In order to take forward the present process of dialogue, confidence building and cooperation between India and Pakistan, Government, during the last six months, have given a comprehensive set of proposals to Pakistan on a broad range of issues, including military and non-military CBMs, promoting friendly exchanges and cooperation in the fields of art, culture, education, science and technology, youth affairs and sports, media and tourism, for trade promotion, transit, cooperation in fields of agriculture, petroleum and natural gas, information technology, telecommunications, postal services civil aviation, shipping, capital market, etc.

Agreement has been reached to restore the strength of the respective High Commissions to the original level of 110, to upgrade, dedicate and secure the communication link between the DGMOs establish a hotline between the two Foreign Secretaries, conclude an